

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed is:

1. A roof rack apparatus for an automotive vehicle having a generally horizontal roof portion and a generally vertical side portion, comprising:

at least one storage surface supported on said roof portion of said vehicle, said at least one storage surface including a side rail member positionable generally perpendicular to said at least one storage surface, said side rail member including a hinge bar pivotally supported on said at least one storage surface to permit pivotal movement of said side rail members relative to said at least one storage surface between a raised basket-forming position and a lowered collapsed position.

2. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said roof rack includes a pair of laterally disposed front side rail members and a pair of laterally disposed rear side rail members, each said side rail member being pivotally movable independently of each other side rail member.

3. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 2, wherein said roof rack apparatus further includes front and rear transverse rail members that form a basket with said side rail members when in said raised basket-forming position.

4. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 3 wherein said front and rear transverse rail members are pivotally movable between said raised basket-forming position and a lowered collapsed position.

5. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 4 wherein said at least one storage surface comprises a pair of laterally disposed storage surfaces corresponding to said rear side rail members, each said storage surface being movable laterally relative to the other said storage surface.

6. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 5 wherein each said storage surface further includes:

a pair of longitudinally spaced track members, the corresponding said hinge bar for said rear side rail being pivotally supported by said track members to permit the pivotal movement of the corresponding said rear side rail member;

a plurality of longitudinally extending support members interconnecting said track members; and

a pair of connecting members slidably received in guide rails mounted to said vehicle roof portion, each said connecting member pivotally connecting one of said track members to permit pivotal movement of said track members relative to said guide rails such that said track members are laterally movable along said guide rails and pivotally movable relative to said guide rails to position said storage surface generally vertically along said side portion of said automotive vehicle.

7. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 6 wherein said side rail members include a trim member selectively interengageable between adjacent front and rear side rail members, said trim member being movable to permit a gap to be formed between said adjacent front and rear side rail members when one of said side rail members is to be moved into said lowered collapsed position so that said side rail members can be lowered below said guide rails.

8. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 7 wherein said trim member is housed within one of said adjacent front and rear side rail members and is extendible therefrom to engage the other of said adjacent front and rear side rail members when said adjacent front and rear side rail members are in said raised position, said trim member being retractable into said one of said adjacent front and rear side rail members when any of said adjacent front and rear side rail members are to be placed into said lowered collapsed position.

9. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 7 wherein said trim piece is removable from said adjacent front and rear side rail members, said trim piece including an internal spring mechanism for maintaining engagement with said adjacent front and rear side rail members.

10. A roof rack apparatus for an automotive vehicle having a generally horizontal roof portion and a generally vertical side portion, comprising:

a pair of laterally disposed front side rail members;

a pair of laterally disposed rear side rail members in register with said front side rail members; and

a pair of laterally opposing storage surfaces supported on said roof portion, each of said rear side rail members being supported from one of said storage surfaces, said storage surfaces being movable laterally relative to the other said storage surface.

11. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 10 wherein each said storage surface comprises:

a pair of longitudinally spaced track members,;

a plurality of longitudinally extending support members interconnecting said track members; and

a pair of connecting members slidably received in guide rails mounted to said vehicle roof portion, each said connecting member pivotally connecting one of said track members to permit pivotal movement of said track members relative to said guide rails such that said track members are laterally movable along said guide rails and pivotally movable relative to said guide rails to position said storage surface generally vertically along said side portion of said automotive vehicle.

12. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 11 wherein each of said side rail members includes a pivotally supported hinge bar to permit pivotal movement of said side rail member between a raised basket-forming position and a lowered collapsed position, said hinge bar for said rear side rail members being pivotally supported by said track members to permit the pivotal movement of the corresponding said rear side rail member.

13. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 12 wherein said roof rack apparatus further comprises front and rear transverse rail members pivotally movable between said raised basket-forming position and a lowered collapsed position to form a basket with said side rail members when in said raised basket-forming position.

14. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 13 wherein said side rail members include a trim member selectively interengageable between adjacent front and rear side rail members, said trim member being movable to permit a gap to be formed between said adjacent front and rear side rail members when one of said side rail members is to be moved into said lowered collapsed position so that said side rail members can be lowered below said guide rails.

15. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 14 wherein said trim member is housed within one of said adjacent front and rear side rail members and is extendible therefrom to engage the other of said adjacent front and rear side rail members when said adjacent front and rear side rail members are in said raised position, said trim member being retractable into said one of said adjacent front and rear side rail members when any of said adjacent front and rear side rail members are to be placed into said lowered collapsed position.

16. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 14 wherein said trim piece is removable from said adjacent front and rear side rail members, said trim piece including an internal spring mechanism for maintaining engagement with said adjacent front and rear side rail members.

17. A roof rack apparatus for an automotive vehicle having a generally horizontal roof portion and a generally vertical side portion, comprising:

a pair of laterally disposed front side rail members, each said front side rail members including a hinge bar being pivotally supported for movement of said front side rail member between a raised basket-forming position and a lowered collapsed position;

a pair of laterally disposed rear side rail members in register with said front side rail members; and

a pair of laterally opposing storage surfaces supported on said roof portion, each of said rear side rail members including a hinge bar pivotally supported from a corresponding one of said storage surfaces for movement between said raised basket-forming position and said lowered collapsed position, each said storage surface being mounted for independent movement laterally relative to the other said storage surface.



18. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 17 wherein each said storage surface further includes:

a pair of longitudinally spaced track members, the corresponding said hinge bar for said corresponding rear side rail member being pivotally supported by said track members to permit the pivotal movement of the corresponding said rear side rail member; and

a pair of connecting members slidably received in guide rails mounted to said vehicle roof portion, each said connecting member pivotally connecting one of said track members to permit pivotal movement of said track members relative to said guide rails such that said track members are laterally movable along said guide rails and pivotally movable relative to said guide rails to position said storage surface generally vertically along said side portion of said automotive vehicle.

19. The roof rack apparatus of Claim 18 wherein said roof rack apparatus further comprises front and rear transverse rail members pivotally movable between said raised basket-forming position and a lowered collapsed position to form a basket with said side rail members when in said raised basket-forming position.

20.           The roof rack apparatus of Claim 19 wherein said side rail members include a trim member selectively interengageable between adjacent front and rear side rail members, said trim member being movable to permit a gap to be formed between said adjacent front and rear side rail members when one of said side rail members is to be moved into said lowered collapsed position so that said side rail members can be lowered below said guide rails, said trim member being housed within one of said adjacent front and rear side rail members and is extendible therefrom to engage the other of said adjacent front and rear side rail members when said adjacent front and rear side rail members are in said raised position, said trim member being retractable into said one of said adjacent front and rear side rail members when any of said adjacent front and rear side rail members are to be placed into said lowered collapsed position.